

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY SIGNS BILL TO BAN NEW HOG WASTE LAGOONS
New Regulations Will Encourage Improved Standards To Protect The Environment

RALEIGH - Gov. Mike Easley today signed into law **Senate Bill 1465**: "An act to 1) codify and make permanent the Swine Farm Animal Waste Management System Performance Standards that the General Assembly enacted in 1998, (2) provide for the replacement of a lagoon that is an imminent hazard, (3) assist farmers to voluntarily convert to innovative animal waste management systems, and (4) establish the Swine Farm Methane Capture Pilot Program." The law bans new hog waste lagoons and launches programs to convert and modernize current lagoons to meet stricter standards to protect the environment.

"We do not have to choose between a strong economy and a clean environment," said Easley. "This legislation provides assistance to hog operators who invest in the new technologies with a payoff for all of us that protects our rivers and streams."

The new law prohibits the construction of new hog waste lagoons and sprayfields as primary methods of waste management. New waste management systems must adhere to stricter environmental regulations. The legislation will help provide grants to farms to aid in closing current systems and begin using modern waste management technology.

The law also creates the Swine Farm Methane Capture Pilot Program to generate electricity from methane gas collected by animal waste management systems. It creates a cost-sharing program for farmers to convert to the new technologies with the state covering 90 percent of the cost, or up to \$500,000 for each applicant over the next five years. The state share will be 80 percent in 2012 and 75 percent in 2017.

"This is a major step forward for our state and our farmers as we try to ensure the long-term sustainability of the hog industry," said state Sen. Charles Albertson (D-Duplin, Lenoir, Sampson), the bill's sponsor. "I am sure our regulators and those in the industry will work cooperatively to protect our rivers and streams."

"With this new law, North Carolina also is taking an innovative step to see if we can economically generate electricity from the methane gas from these waste management systems," said state Rep. Russell Tucker (D-Duplin). "This pilot program could save millions on utility bills, particularly in rural areas."

Section Three of the law became effective July 1, 2007 retroactively. All other sections are effective September 1, 2007. The legislation passed the Senate on a 48-0 vote and passed the House 108-0.

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